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RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3948  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1429  
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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9764  
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2628  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 2465  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000888

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/22/2019  
TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR PTER PE  
SUBJECT: AMAZON PROTESTS SUBSIDE, COPYCATS CONTINUE

REF: LIMA 875 (AND PREVIOUS)

Classified By: DCM James Nealon for reasons 1.4b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: After Congress repealed two legislative decrees (ref), prolonged protests by Amazon communities appear to have subsided. The GOP must now negotiate with indigenous and regional leaders to develop new laws. Should a majority of legislators vote to "censure" the PM, who has been summoned to Congress to explain the government's actions, the entire cabinet may be forced to resign. The deficient government response to the crisis has also undercut President Garcia's popularity, according to the latest polling. Meanwhile, copycat protests seeking to take advantage of the government's weakness continue in the southern highlands cities of Andahuaylas and Cusco. End Summary.

Amazon Protests Abate

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¶2. (C) After the repeal of two presidential decrees that sought to provide increased protection to the Peruvian Amazon, the immediate political crisis and prolonged protests of Amazon community groups appear over for now. Indigenous groups thanked the government for repealing the laws, and indigenous leaders have removed the roadblocks east of Lima and on the Amazonian road from Tarapoto to Yurimaguas. Some Nationalist Party congress people have called on the government to repeal other related decrees, but there is so far little momentum behind this effort.

¶3. (C) The next step toward finding a definitive resolution of the conflict is for the multi-sector commission -- established in the middle of the crisis -- to negotiate with indigenous and regional leaders to develop new forestry laws. Our contacts at the Ministry of Trade and Tourism tell us that they hope this process should be completed within one to three months. There is no fixed timeline, however, and the GOP does not yet developed a concrete plan for consulting affected communities.

Congress Seeks to Censure Prime Minister

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¶4. (SBU) Congress has summoned Prime Minister Yehude Simon on June 24 to explain the government's actions during the Amazonian conflict. The plenary is planning to hold a "censure" (or no-confidence) vote, possibly the next day. If the censure vote passes, Simon is constitutionally required to resign, and the President is required to accept within 72 hours. Although not required by the constitution, in

practice, when the PM has resigned, the entire Cabinet has as well. While congressional anger against Simon remains acute (refs), our contacts in Congress believe that momentum may be shifting away from a vote to censure him formally. (Note: Censure requires the vote of a majority of the 113 currently active Congress members. If Congress formally censures more than one Cabinet in this way during a five-year Congressional period, the President is constitutionally permitted to dissolve Congress. This is a check on Congress's power, which aims to prevent Congress from frivolously forcing the dissolution of Cabinets, as happened during the 1980s. End Note.)

#### President Garcia and his Government Drop in Polls

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¶ 15. (SBU) The Amazonian protests and "deficient" government response has hit President Garcia's popularity hard, according to the latest national urban poll. Ipsos Apoyo reports that Garcia fell from 34% support in March - after six months of relative political calm - to 30% in May and 21% in June. Ninety-two percent of poll respondents said the GOP should have consulted more with indigenous communities before passing forestry decrees, 53% approved the annulment of the decrees, and 57% said the indigenous were on the right side of the conflict. Seventy-three percent of respondents said the Minister of the Interior should resign, and 63% said the Prime Minister should resign. Meantime, popular support for Congress was lower still, having plunged to 11%.

#### Andahuaylas and Cusco Protests Continue

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¶ 16. (C) Although the Amazonian protests have abated, copycat protests -- unrelated to the demands of Amazonian indigenous groups and clearly seeking to take advantage of the government's weakness -- continue in the southern highland cities Andahuaylas and Cusco. The Mayor of Andahuaylas told us he believes the Prime Minister should be able to successfully negotiate an agreement on June 23, but warned that supporters of jailed radical leader Antauro Humala may seek to radicalize the protests. (Note: Andahuaylas is the site of Antauro Humala's infamous 2005 rebellion that led to the deaths of six people in a shootout with police. End Note.) In Cusco, protestors continue to block a main road in the province of Canchis. Protestors sought June 22 to take over the international airport but were prevented from doing so by security forces, and have pledged to disrupt the annual Inti Raymi indigenous festival in the outskirts of Cusco city on June 24. The Prime Minister reportedly plans to travel to Cusco on June 25 to negotiate with protest leaders.

MCKINLEY